

REAL LAND OF PROMISE

THE CORN BELT AND HOW IT HAS GROWN.

Buffalo, according to various residents, has grown men who never saw Niagara. Settlers in the corn belt have searched for the native able to tell the origin of the three-foot layer of black soil that has given the Corn Belt, extending from Indiana westward to the Mississippi, a name through the length and breadth of the land. This was the explanation offered by a man who had studied the question:

"For centuries, possibly," he said, "this country stood under water. Year by year water plants appeared, and decayed, a swamp grew, and the matter which rotted under the water became black mud, always becoming thicker. The pioneer settled up to the swamp, and in time drained it. Then the mud, the black soil, the great grower of corn, appeared, and the Corn Belt became a fact."

Besides the soil that wears so bountifully, there is a climate that favors growth and generally ripens the crop. When clouds gather down Iowa and Illinois the Belt receives only a safe amount of rain. When Kansas is burned by hot winds, this favored section is barely touched.

When early frosts kill the nearly ripe crop of southern Minnesota, the grain goes to the east of the Mississippi to maturity unharmed. The spring was wet this year, corn, put in two weeks later than usual, was far from ripe when September came in. On every hand there was speculation as to the possibility of a killing frost. A large farmer remarked:

"Worry? No, I don't even look out of the window to see if there has been a frost. Corn always gets ripe here. I've seen it come through safely too many years to fear."

Immigration follows the line of least resistance. The Southern found little difficulty in overland travel. The native of Germany, fresh from an ocean voyage, made a trip by boat, following down the Mississippi, and up that river and the Illinois. They populated the Corn Belt, and this made the division, throwing the stranger from the south inland, and accounting for to-day's predominance of German population in the river towns.

Wherever German immigration touches a land that land blossoms. In crossing the country the upmost thought is that the German never settles on poor land or rise has the ability to bring such to a high state of cultivation. The latter is the fact. In speaking of his German tenant, one man said:

"He pulled every stump on the place. After harvest he goes over the whole farm, picking up the sticks, repairing the broken fences and getting the weeds."

About St. Louis whole towns are even yet solid German. Mascoutah is typical of these, and it emphasizes the thrift and cleanliness of the race. The edges of the half mile of brick walk from the railroad station to the business center are also here, and the straight lines of the brick houses. Between the walk and fence half a foot of earth has been stripped of grass, beaten hard and is swept daily, so that no cigar stump, burnt match or banana peel is left to shock the cleanly man from over the fence.

The farms for miles around this point are planted to sweet corn. The capacity of the plant is several hundred thousand ears a day.

Every year the corn belt receives an occasional immigrant, a stranger who is to work one of the farms on shares. Travelers who stumbled through the early dawn to take the train from Shattuck to a family of the father, a bewhiskered Slav, stout and broad; the mother, round-faced, heavy and jolly; six children all under 12 years of age, and a small dog, were waiting for the morning train which was to take them fifty miles on up the road, to the corn belt, the land of promise.

COUNTED HIS FOOTSTEPS.

A German Explorer's Way of Mapping His Route Through Africa.

Count Edward Wickenburg, a German explorer, has returned home after a long expedition in Africa. He started from the French port of Dakar, traveled inland to Adiakebe, the capital of Kint, and then on to the great brackish lake Rudolf, and finally to Lamu, on the Indian Ocean. It was a very fruitful journey and the best feature of it was the map he brought home of his entire itinerary.

Count Wickenburg, who had with him two pedometers, which counted his footsteps for him, and he thus saved the labor which would have been required to count every step himself. Wickenburg ascertained very carefully the average length of his steps, and he represented on the map by a line a little over a third of an inch in length. Every mile he walked added about an inch to his route on the map.

When his path was straightaway he often walked as far as 2,000 steps before he stopped to mark his map at the point he had reached. If the path were crooked he stopped more frequently.

So he trudged on, compass in hand, taking the process of engineering to meet of the process of counting his footsteps. Twenty-one big sheets were required to record the first stage of his journey, a distance of 73 miles.

When the expedition returned home his hundreds of big map sheets were reduced, in the process of engraving, to sheets of much smaller scale. His map has been published this month in six sheets; and a fine product it is, giving much detail about every important aspect of the country for miles away on both sides of the map.

SPEAKER CANNON'S CIGARS.

Evidence That He Doesn't Yet Realize Fully His Change of Office.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 21.—Uncle Joe Cannon hasn't fully come to a realization of the fact that he is the Speaker of the House of Representatives, or, if he has, he occasionally shows it.

On this week after the House went into committee of the whole, he came down from the rostrum and absently walked through the corridor to the room of the Committee on Appropriations, of which he was chairman for two years.

Approaching the desk he formerly occupied, he seemed to look for something.

"Is it, Mr. Cannon?" asked one of the clerks.

"Why, my box of cigars," said the Speaker.

"Didn't you take it with you into the Speaker's room?" replied the clerk, pleasantly.

"By Jove, that's right!" exclaimed Uncle Joe with a characteristic gesture of his head. "I had forgotten."

But the fact which he had forgotten was not where he had placed his box of cigars. He was chairman for two years.

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